

Introduction

From the rugged Blue Ridge Mountains in the west to the rolling Piedmont in the east, this area is characterized by memorable scenic vistas; horse, cattle and dairy operations; and row crop farms that provide feed for area livestock and produce for local and regional markets. Commonly known as hunt country, the region is host to many traditional horse-centered activities, including point-to-point events, fox hunts and polo matches. Orchards, wineries, forests, and rural and suburban residential developments complete the land use types that make up this district.

Although essentially rural with an agrarian economy, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region has begun to experience many of the pressures typical of areas adjacent to the urban crescent. Surrounded by high growth rate areas to the north, south and east, the region's potential for development is the subject of scrutiny by builders and entrepreneurs. Telecommuters and people who are willing to commute to employment opportunities in Northern Virginia, Charlottesville and the Richmond area add to development pressure.

As local governments evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of development, they must identify and implement effective strategies that will allow management of inevitable growth while protecting regional resources. Some landowners, interested in maintaining the pastoral quality of the region, have voluntarily committed all or part of their property to conservation and open space easements. Approximately 126,406 acres in this area are in conservation easements held, for the most part, by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation. Fauquier County landowners have protected more than 70,991 acres through conservation easements, with another 20,366 acres in Orange and 23,009 in Rappahannock counties. Easements in both Madison and Culpeper counties cover 12,040 acres. In addition, many properties are owned and managed by land preservation trusts or foundations.

Most federal and state-owned open space is located in the western part of the district. Federal properties, specifically Shenandoah National Park and the section of the Appalachian Trail that passes through the area, make up about 66,000 acres of open space. State-owned properties include Sky Meadows State Park, Whitney State Forest, and Thompson, Rapidan, Weston and Chester Phelps wildlife management

areas. These combine to add another 21,500 acres to the public open space in this region.

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Region covers an area of about 1,993 square miles and is home to more than 158,442 people. The population is estimated to grow to 183,900 by 2020. The region is made up of Culpeper, Fauquier, Rappahannock, Madison and Orange counties and the towns of Orange, Remington, Warrenton, Culpeper, Madison and Gordonsville.

The area experienced an increase in population of 17.6 percent between 2000 and 2005, following a 15.6 percent increase from 1990 to 2000. Orange and Culpeper counties absorbed the greater part of that earlier increase with growth rates of 20.8 percent and 23.3 percent, respectively, until 2000. More recently, Culpeper and Fauquier counties have taken the lead with 24.1 percent and 17.9 percent respective growth rates from 2000 to 2005—among the fastest growing counties in the state. Orange County is not far behind, with a growth rate of 16.9 percent over the same period. The largest towns in the region based on 2005 estimates are Culpeper (12,047), Warrenton (8,635) and Orange (4,429).

Major growth areas have developed along the Route 29 corridor — from the Town of Culpeper to Route 17 at Remington, northward along Route 17 in Warrenton, and where Route 17 approaches Interstate 66. Routes 29 and 15 in Fauquier and Route 3 in Orange are also being impacted by development pressure from Northern Virginia and Fredericksburg.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)*, it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 9 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

Based on input from public meetings, there is more need for transportation alternatives, specifically trails for walking, hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. If developed with multiple uses in mind, a comprehensive trail system could link small communities and specific destinations, thus providing exercise options and transportation alternatives. Limited safe cycling opportunities might be expanded through accommodation within a well-developed trail system.

Citizens also expressed interest in more canoeing and kayaking opportunities, more water sports and more public access to water in general.

More park space is needed to provide competitive facilities such as ballfields, courts of all types and swimming pools. Also needed are parks with open space for passive activities like nature study, reading and picnicking. Increased opportunities for active seniors are needed at all parks and facilities (see Table X-9).

Each county except for Rappahannock County in Region 9 is served by a parks and recreation department. According to the Commonwealth of Virginia Auditor of Public Accounts, *Comparative Report on Local Government Revenues and Expenditures* (year ended June 30, 2005), per capita spending on parks and recreation for each locality in this region was: Culpeper, \$8.45; Fauquier, \$34.29; Madison, \$20.70; Orange, \$40.70; and Rappahannock, \$1.61. This compares to a statewide per capita spending on parks and recreation of \$55.31, including \$85.51 from towns, \$43.75 from counties, and \$76.45 per capita spending on parks and recreation from cities.

Land conservation

Some of the protected lands in Region 9 include the Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve which straddles Fauquier and Prince William counties. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation owns the 2,486-acre preserve. The Bull Run Mountain Conservancy maintains parking space and hiking trails at the southern end of the preserve and provides interpretive and environmental education programs. In Fauquier County, The Nature Conservancy owns the 665-acre Wildcat Mountain Natural Area Preserve. Great Meadow, located in The Plains, is owned by the Meadow Outdoors Foundation and is dedicated to the preservation of open space for horse and field events. Great Meadow provides a unique setting for horse shows, polo matches, wine festivals, cross-country field trials and soccer matches. Drawing more than one million people annually to its 175-acre site, Great

Meadow is a popular destination preserved for outdoor events in perpetuity for generations to come. A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation. Conservation lands in the region are shown Map X-18.

Land Trusts and Conservation Programs Operating in Region 9:

- APVA Preservation Virginia
- Blue Ridge Foothills Conservancy
- Capital Region Land Conservancy
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Civil War Preservation Trust
- Land Trust of Virginia
- National Park Trust
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Potomac Conservancy
- Scenic Virginia
- The Conservation Fund
- The 500-Year Forest Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land
- Virginia Department of Historic Resources
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation

Land conservation recommendations include:

- Obtain additional easements to buffer existing natural areas such as Shenandoah National Park and the Bull Run Mountains.
- Implement agricultural conservation measures in southern Fauquier, especially along Route 28.
- Protect farms adjacent to the Rapidan River in Madison and Orange counties.
- Protect riparian lands along the Rappahannock River.
- Protect scenic views along trails and acquire trail right-of-way to create a corridor that links Manassas Gap, Crooked Run Valley, Gap Run Valley, Fleetwood and Avoka state forests, and Sky Meadows State Park.
- Protect the travel corridors of Routes 15 and 230 for their scenic value.
- Protect the Ashby Gap and Manassas Gap areas — priority conservation areas for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.
- Regional and local agencies and organization should develop a regional green infrastructure plan and promote the value of this planning model.

Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section.

Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

- Local and regional agencies should evaluate the transportation network to see what paved and unpaved roadways are currently used as trails and protect these trail corridors in land use and transportation plans.

Statewide trunkline trails

1 The **Appalachian National Scenic Trail** is an existing National Scenic Trail. Because of this special designation, localities that host the Appalachian Trail should protect viewsheds at existing overlooks and along the corridor. Changes in land uses in areas adjacent to the Appalachian Trail must be carefully considered to assure protection of this valuable resource.

Other trails

2 Local and regional organizations should consider the development of a non-motorized, multi-use

Rappahannock River Heritage Trail, which would link the Tidewater area to the mountains. This greenway, hiking and water trail system along the Rappahannock River could provide a connection from the Chesapeake Bay through the rapidly urbanizing Fredericksburg area to the Appalachian Trail (AT).

3 The **Virginia Central Rail-Trail** linking Fredericksburg to Spotsylvania, Culpeper and Orange counties should be developed by local and regional agencies and organizations. Two small sections of the trail are already complete — one in Alum Spring Park that is maintained by the City of Fredericksburg, and a second in Spotsylvania County that links a school and playing fields. This proposed trail would provide access to Civil War battlefields, historic properties, schools, playgrounds and commercial sites.

4 Trails linking the **Rapidan Wildlife Management Area** and **Shenandoah National Park**, to include a non-motorized, multi-use trail along the **Conway River**, should be developed by the local, regional and state agencies and organizations working in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS).

5 The Bull Run Mountains Conservancy manages 800 acres of forest on the southern end of Bull Run Mountains. Because of the proximity to the Washington D.C. metro area, the **Bull Run Mountain Trail** is heavily used and some rehabilitation work is needed. Development pressure is threatening the area around the mountain, and more work is needed to buffer this important natural resource. Connecting the Bull Run Mountain Trail to the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST) network may provide more opportunities to protect the resource and should be pursued in partnership with local, regional, state and federal agencies and organizations.

6 Development of trails at the **Laurel Valley Landfill Mountain Bike Park** in Culpeper County should be continued.

7 Local and regional agencies and organizations should work with Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to designate and develop the **Culpeper Historical Horse Trail**, a loop trail connecting Brandy Station to Kelly's Ford and Stevensburg that utilizes existing roadways.

8 Local and regional agencies and organizations should develop the **Culpeper Rappahannock Bike, Pedestrian and Horse Trail**, roughly 25 miles from Mountain Run in the town of Culpeper to the Rappahannock River. Develop the segment called the

Mountain Run Trail from Davis Street at the Culpeper Train Depot to Germanna College. At Braggs Corner, the trail would connect to Stevensburg.

9 Local and regional agencies and organizations should develop a **Culpeper Community Trail** connecting the community complex to the high school and routes identified in the *Culpeper County Bike/Ped Plan* that is part of the 2005 adopted comprehensive plan.

10 Local and regional agencies and organizations should develop the **Historic Culpeper Trail**, a paved, 25-mile multi-use corridor from historic Waterloo Bridge through historic Culpeper to Cedar Mountain Battlefield.

11 **Fauquier County** should **connect all county parks** using a countywide trail system. The north, south and central sports complexes should be connected to the swimming complex in Southern Fauquier.

12 The Town of Warrenton should extend the **Warrenton Branch Greenway**, both a path and historic area that has become a focal point for downtown.

Water access and blueways

Significant public-owned lakes and reservoirs in the region include Lake Orange in Orange County and Lake Pelham and Mountain Run Lake in Culpeper County. Lake Orange is a 124-acre public fishing lake in Orange County that was impounded in 1964 and opened to fishing in 1967. The lake is located a few miles east of Orange and has a boat ramp, concession, fishing pier, parking lot, picnic facilities and shoreline access. Other fishing is available at Lake Thompson, Lake Brittle and Phelps Pond. C.M. Crockett Park in Fauquier County has a boat launch and boat rentals, along with fishing areas and a pier.

A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
- Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
- Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as

restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.

- Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should continue development of a new access site near the Town of Remington on the Rappahannock River at Rappahannock Station Park. To provide other needed access points, work with private landowners to develop access sites with limited facilities for canoes and kayaks. Canoe-in camping, picnicking and shuttle services would be desired amenities during the warmer seasons.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should provide an access site for paddlers at the confluence of the Thornton and Hazel Rivers.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should improve access to the Rappahannock along Fauquier County's entire western boundary.

The following river segments are used by paddlers and would benefit from established access points with appropriate visitor services and interpretation:

- 13 **Rappahannock River** from the confluence with the Jordan River to Fredericksburg.
- 14 **Hazel River** from the confluence with the Hughes River to Remington.
- 15 **Rapidan River** from the Madison County - Orange County line to its confluence with the Rappahannock.
- 16 **Thornton River** from Sperryville to its confluence with the Hazel River.

Historic and landscape resources

The John Singleton Mosby Heritage Area, designated in 1995, was formed to increase awareness of the historic, cultural and natural qualities of this unique area in Northern Virginia. This area, managed by the Mosby Heritage Area Association, encompasses all, or a portion of, the counties of Loudoun, Fauquier, Prince William, Warren, Clarke and Rappahannock in Virginia, as well as a part of Jefferson County, West Virginia. This area, the first heritage area in the Commonwealth, has proven to be of significant value to the regional economy and its success should encourage the designation of similar sites throughout the region. According to data from the Virginia Main

Street Program – between July 1996 and July 2002, 12 historic rehabilitation projects were completed in this heritage area. Total valuation was \$7.2 million, and the projects generated 112 construction jobs, 102 jobs in other sectors and \$5.61 million in household earnings.

Montpelier, home to three generations of the James Madison family, is owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. With more than 2,700 acres of rolling pasturelands, formal gardens and The James Madison Landmark Forest, the site attracts local and regional visitors.

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- There is a critical need for county-wide surveys of the historic and architectural resources of Culpeper and Madison counties.
- There is a critical need for archaeological survey in Rappahannock County and for an assessment of the archaeological resources of the County.

17 The **Journey Through Hallowed Ground**

Partnership is a four-state, nonprofit organization dedicated to raising regional, national and international awareness of the historic, cultural and natural resources along a corridor generally following the Old Carolina Road (Routes 15 and 231) from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia. DCR and local governments should support designation of a nationally recognized historic corridor along this route to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.

18 The Brandy Station Foundation is working to develop **Kelly's Ford Battlefield Overlook Park** following the fee simple acquisition of Kelly's Ford, an important crossing on the Rappahannock River throughout history, and particularly significant for its role in the Battle of Brandy Station. The Brandy Station Foundation plans to develop appropriate recreational use of the eight-acre property with signage, interpretive displays and walking paths in accordance with the carrying capacity of the site. More law enforcement may be needed initially to establish a zero-tolerance policy for behaviors that damage the resource.

19 The Piedmont Environmental Council and Fauquier County Parks and Recreation received Virginia Land Conservation Foundation funds in 2005 to help preserve a Civil War Battlefield as part of **Rappahannock Station Park**. This new 26-acre riverfront park will provide public access to the Rappahannock River in Fauquier County, and development should be implemented in accordance with the adopted master plan. Planned park activities include historic exploration, boating, fishing and wildlife viewing; facilities supporting these activities are needed.

20 Both **Fodderstack Road and Ben Venue Road** (Route 729) should be nominated for inclusion in a Rural Historic District.

21 The **Friends of Cedar Mountain Battlefield** are working to preserve the cropland and grazing land, wildlife habitat, stream corridor and open space where 3,000 men were injured or killed in an 1862 Civil War battle. Plans should be implemented to develop a wildlife-viewing trail on the property.

22 Historic **interpretation of the canals and locks** is needed along the Rappahannock River in Fauquier County.

23 **Scrabble School** in Rappahannock County should be renovated.

Scenic resources

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning District contains some of the most beautiful areas of the state. The unique scenic quality and sense of place is derived from the rolling hills, farms and forests of the Piedmont framed by the Blue Ridge Mountains. This pastoral character, graced with significant cultural and historic resources, maintains the region's economic vitality as a tourist attraction and an attractive place to live and work. These qualities have been recognized in the designation of hundreds of miles of roads as Virginia Byways. Each locality should conduct a visual-resource assessment as part of their green infrastructure inventory and mapping process to help protect these resources. Universities and other institutions could be used to supplement and support this effort.

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
 - Encourage development away from mountaintops to protect significant vistas.
 - Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
 - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
 - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.

24 Regional and local agencies and organizations should protect the scenic quality of **Montpelier**.

25 Regional and local agencies and organizations should protect the scenic quality of the **John Singleton Mosby Heritage Area**.

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural

landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways. Regional and local recommendations include:

- The following scenic corridors are recognized in Virginia and should receive consideration by local and regional plans for viewshed management.
 - Journey Through Hallowed Ground Corridor
 - Appalachian Trail
 - Shenandoah National Park (Skyline Drive)
- Management of scenic resources is linked to the economic prosperity of the state as it relates to tourism and the overall aesthetic character of the Commonwealth for business, industry and residents. Local governments should encourage landowners, localities and planning district commissions to develop a scenic overlay zone adjacent to and within the viewshed of these corridors as part of a multi-regional viewshed planning process.
- The Skyline Drive (Shenandoah National Park) was recently designated a National Scenic Byway. The National Scenic Byway designation allows the locality to apply for funding through the National Scenic Byways Grant Program. Localities should focus on enhancing the traveling and visitor experience and managing, restoring and preserving scenic or historic roads.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.

The following road segments are potential and should be evaluated for consideration as Virginia Byways:

26 **Route 3** south from the Rapidan River to the Spotsylvania County line.

27 **Route 522** south from the Town of Culpeper to the Spotsylvania County line.

28 **Route 230** in Madison and Orange counties.

29 **Route 15** in Madison, Fauquier and Culpeper counties.

30 **Route 729** in Rappahannock County.

31 **Route 29** south of Culpeper into Madison.

32 **Route 229** from Route 211 to Route 522.

33 **Route 724** in Fauquier County.

34 **Route 702** in Fauquier County from Route 709 to Route 626.

Scenic rivers

An ever-increasing awareness of Virginia's Scenic Rivers is a direct result of concerns for water quality, bio-diversity, scenic landscapes and water quantity. River resources are a critical component for natural resource planning. In this region, there are two designated scenic river segments: the Rappahannock River from its headwaters to the bridge on Route 3, and Goose Creek from its headwaters to the Potomac River.

For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Localities should adopt planning tools (e.g., land use overlays, corridor management plans) that will afford special recognition and protection to Virginia's scenic rivers.

The following river segments qualify for designation as Virginia Scenic Rivers:

35 The **Rapidan River** from Germanna Ford to its confluence with the Rappahannock River has been evaluated and found to qualify for scenic river status.

36 The entire **Thornton River**.

The following river segments are potential Virginia Scenic Rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

37 **Hughes River** in Madison, Rappahannock and Culpeper counties.

38 **Hazel River** from its headwaters in Rappahannock County to its confluence with the Rappahannock River in Culpeper County.

39 **Robinson River** from its headwaters to its confluence with the Rapidan River.

40 **Rapidan River** from its headwaters to Germanna Ford.

41 **Rush River** in Rappahannock County.

42 **Jordan River** in Rappahannock County.

43 **Covington River** in Rappahannock County.

44 **Piney River** in Rappahannock County.

Watershed resources

This region is within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed with most of the area draining to the Rappahannock River. However, part of Orange and Greene counties drains to the James River, part of Orange County drains to the York River, and part of Fauquier County drains to the Potomac River. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs.

Watershed groups in Region 9

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Friends of the Rappahannock
- Friends of the Rush River
- Hazel River Task Force
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Rappahannock Friends and Lovers of Our Watershed (RappFLOW)
- Rappahannock County Conservation Alliance
- Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection
- The Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Virginia Conservation Network

Watershed recommendations for this region include:

45 Local and regional agencies should continue work on the **Upper Thornton River Watershed Project** as a model for watershed protection in the region.

46 Local and regional agencies should develop a watershed management project for the **Hughes River Watershed** similar to the Upper Thornton project.

- 47** Local and regional agencies should develop a watershed management project for the **Rapidan River Wildlife Corridor** similar to the Upper Thornton project.

Environmental and land stewardship education

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education.

- The Bull Run Mountain Conservancy provides educational programs on the ecological, historical and cultural features of the Bull Run Mountains. The conservancy should continue to work in partnership with local schools to provide experiential learning through field trips, internships and research opportunities for students.
- Environmental Studies at Airlie (a division of the 501(c)(3) nonprofit International Academy for Preventive Medicine, Inc.) was established in 1989 as a research, conservation and education organization. Internationally recognized research with swans and other waterfowl is conducted there. The organization also promotes wildlife conservation in the Piedmont region through model conservation and research projects at Clifton Farm. The farm's classroom facilities should continue to be used for field trips and presentations for schools and special interest groups.
- Local foresters should continue to provide education workshops for small woodlot landowners and participate in Project Learning Tree, an international environmental education curriculum.
- In Fauquier County, outdoor interpretive areas connected to a nature center for environmental education and training are available and should continue at C.M. Crockett Park, Lake Brittle Recreation Area and the Northern Sports Complex.

- 48** Expand facilities at **Lake Brittle** to increase fishing opportunities, angling education, and environmental and water-related education.

Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

National parks

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with the National Park Service (NPS) to revise policy, which would allow mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.
- The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, the second largest military park in the world, is partially located in Orange County. Of the park's currently owned 7,600 acres, there are 23 miles of trails, 1,100 acres of open fields and 6,500 acres of forest. This park should continue to provide cultural resource programs, recreational facilities and open space to the region.

- 49** Cyclists have identified the need for suitable bicycle access connecting the valley to the piedmont across the northern half of the Blue Ridge Mountains in **Shenandoah National Park**. Routes 33 and 211, which are open to traffic, are not safe for cyclists, equestrians, or horse-drawn carriages. Suitable roads include Route 670 to Fishers Gap and Skyland Road to Old Rag Road among others. Once opened to trail users, these roads would link the greater areas surrounding Luray and Warrenton-Culpeper. Federal transportation monies could be utilized to assist with carriage road maintenance if they were to accommodate non-motorized transportation.

State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

State Parks

- 50** **Sky Meadows State Park** (1,862 acres) is located in Fauquier and Clarke counties and is situated on the eastern slope of the Blue Ridge. Rich in history, the park has rolling pastures, woodlands and scenic vistas, as well as providing a look into a bygone era. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in May 2004, the Mount Bleak House serves as the park's visitor center. The park has a primitive hike-in campground, as well as opportunities for picnicking. Natural and historic interpretive and educational programs are also provided. There are more than 15 miles of hiking and horseback riding trails. The park also has access to the Appalachian Trail. Efforts should be made to develop creative solutions to solicit interest in operating the horse rental facilities.

Through the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB) funds, the park will be getting a picnic area with shelters and restroom, and an expansion of the primitive campground. Improvements and enhancements to the trail system will, in part, also be funded by bond funds.

Opportunities exist to develop trail connections to the adjacent Ovoka Farm, which is owned by the Piedmont Environmental Council. The park is also adjacent to a section of the Thompson Wildlife Management Area (WMA), which provides more opportunities to develop connecting trails. Since the Appalachian Trail crosses all three properties, options should be explored for developing additional loops — thus creating a more extensive trail system throughout this area.

Future state park sites - The need exists for additional park land and water access in this region of the state; potential acquisitions should be explored along the Rappahannock and Rapidan river corridors east of their confluence within Culpeper County.

State natural area preserves

Bull Run Mountains Natural Area Preserve is located, in part, within the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning District in eastern Fauquier County. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has documented 248 occurrences of 117 rare species and natural communities in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning District. Sixteen of these species are globally rare, and four are listed as threatened or endangered. As of November 2006, there are fifty conservation sites identified within the planning district. Forty sites (80 percent) are protected to some degree through ownership and management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only 19 sites are protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities they support.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 9, DCR is particularly interested in:

- Strengthening protection and management of conservation sites on federal lands.
- Protecting rare natural communities such as diabase woodlands, basic oak-hickory forests and low elevation basic outcrop barrens.

State Fish and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA)

- There are a number of wildlife management areas in the region: G. Richard Thompson, Chester F. Phelps, Rapidan, and Weston. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) should continue to investigate opportunities to acquire in-holdings in their wildlife management areas and to improve each area with trails and other structures for wildlife viewing and other outdoor recreation. Additional lands should be acquired to provide additional access for public hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing recreation.

51 The **Rapidan WMA** consists of 10,326 acres broken into eight separate tracts that are distributed along the east slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Madison and Greene counties. Four of these tracts adjoin Shenandoah National Park and share nearly 25 miles of boundary with the park. An additional 550 acres in Madison County were given to DGIF by the Wildlife Foundation of Virginia. Additional consolidation of this management area in Madison County should be pursued through land exchanges with the Shenandoah National Park and the acquisition of private in-holdings as available. While hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing are primary uses, other outdoor activities compatible with the wildlife management area include hiking, primitive camping and nature photography. Additional trails are needed to provide linkage into Shenandoah National Park.

52 Increase the range of recreational opportunities at **Chester Phelps WMA** by accommodating such activities as horseback riding and primitive canoe-in camping with improved river access.

State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.

- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken the forested environments.
- Agricultural lands should be targeted for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion on these lands.
- Whitney State Forest should implement the management plan that is being developed. Based on the number of existing trails, no new trails are planned. The new management plan will address issues related to a state forest in an urban setting, including increased use for conservation education and exotic species control.
- Adopt and implement the 2006 Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Implement local plans for trails, greenways and bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure, including the Culpeper County Bike/Ped Plan, part of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan (Section 8A), the Fauquier County Connections Plan, the Town of Warrenton Greenway and Trails Plan included in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, and the 1999 Town of Culpeper Bikeway Plan.
- VDOT, the Rappahannock-Rapidan Planning District Commission and the Metropolitan Planning Organization should work to improve coordination between jurisdictions in the region to assure trail connections at county boundaries. Potential opportunities are identified at Routes 29 and 211 in Culpeper, connections to Prince William County at Route 28, Route 29 (Lake Manassas/Broad Run Valley Trail) and Bull Run Mountain, Route 55 to Warren County and Quantico to Stafford County.
- VDOT should implement Context-sensitive design when planning road projects in corridors shared with equestrians.

53 VDOT should enhance and maintain signage along **U. S. Bicycle Route 1** in Fauquier County. When road improvements are made, a bike lane should be added, and facilities for bicyclists should be available along the route.

54 VDOT should consider creation of a **scenic overlook at Brightwood** in Madison County.

Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the transportation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.
- Local and regional agencies should work with the VDOT to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and "active living" opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.

Other State Lands

The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

55 The Locust Grove campus of **Germanna Community College** is located on Route 3 along the Rapidan River midway between Culpeper and Fredericksburg in Orange County. This wooded 100-acre property has trails, tennis courts, playing fields and picnic areas. This site is linked to other points of interest in Culpeper's bike plan and should remain a part of the region's recreational assets.

56 **The Germanna Center for Advanced Technology** is midway between Route 29 and Route 799 and

accessible from Route 3 beside the Town of Culpeper. This 34-acre site should be evaluated for potential open field space and as a location on the Culpeper Rappahannock Bike, Pedestrian and Horse Trail.

Local and regional parks and recreation departments

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.
- Local governments and agencies should consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate and state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.
- Consideration should be given to forming a regional park authority to facilitate management and the expansion of resources needed to best address the parks and natural areas along or in close proximity to the Rappahannock River. Partners could include the City of Fredericksburg and the Counties of Stafford, Spotsylvania, Culpeper, Fauquier and Rappahannock. Technical assistance for initiating a regional park authority may be requested from DCR. A source of seed funding is needed to generate interest among multi-jurisdictional partners.

57 Develop **Hoover Ridge Park** in Madison County in accordance with an adopted park master plan.

Private sector

Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. Because of the abundance of water resources in the region, there are a number of water-based recreational opportunities that could be explored. For a discussion of the private sector role, see Chapter IX-E: Resource Agencies.

The following recommendations pertain to this region:

- The private sector should evaluate fee-based hunting, fishing and boating access opportunities to meet regional demands.
- Wineries and farms could consider inclusion of recreational amenities to further enhance tourism.
- Both residential and commercial developers should consider how they could help meet the recreational needs of the area. For example, a proposed commercial development at Gyory Farm in Culpeper has a conceptual plan that includes a water park, playing fields and an equestrian center with trails.
- Bed and breakfast establishments may consider an initiative to protect scenic and agricultural land while promoting small business enterprises.
- Canoe-in campsites should be evaluated and developed to meet recreational demand for more access to the region's waterways for paddlers. These campsites are particularly needed along the Rappahannock River Trail.

58 **Thoroughfare Gap** (between Bull Run and Pond Mountains near Interstate 66) should be evaluated as a location for a hostel.



Re-enactors at Sky Meadows State Park. Photo by DCR.

Table X-9. Region 9 Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	366,533	72	fields	41	31	46
Basketball	326,825	78	goals	42	36	51
Bicycling	255,046	18	miles	NI		
Mountain	36,653	3	miles	NI		
Other	218,392	16	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	485,045	9,298	water acres	508	8,790	10,688
Power boating	241,606	5,823	water acres	S		
Sailing	34,210	296	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	109,960	619	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	35,126	550	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	64,143	2,010	water acres	S		
Camping	167,689	989	sites	496	493	695
Tent camping	71,474	422	sites	116	306	392
Developed camping	96,215	567	sites	380	187	303
Fitness trail use	75,903	6	mile trails	12	-6	-5
Fields (combined)	363,326	76	fields	49	27	43
Football	206,175	43	fields	49	-6	3
Soccer	157,151	33	fields	-	33	40
Stream use (combined)	583,245	372	stream miles	365	7	83
Freshwater fishing	507,037	357	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	42,609	11	stream miles	S		
Rafting	6,109	1	stream miles	S		
Tubing	27,490	4	stream miles	S		
Golfing	160,053	5	courses	81	1	2
Hiking, backpacking	255,046	131	trail miles	275	-144	-118
Horseback riding	42,762	19	miles	180	-161	-158
In-line skating	35,126	2	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	2,048,002	164	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	48,871	7	sites	-	7	8

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Table X-9. Region 9 Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	169,827	441	tables	593	-152	-62
Skateboarding	59,562	18	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	32,072	1	ski lifts	-	1	1
Softball	241,301	43	fields	52	-9	0
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	362,409	26	beach acres	1	25	30
Swimming	1,527,220	106		NI		
Outdoor Area	821,644	84	beach acres	1	83	100
Outdoor pools	455,112	19	pools	19	0	4
Indoor pools	250,464	3	pools	-	3	3
Tennis	96,062	60	courts	58	2	14
Used a playground	386,692	55	sites	42	13	24
Visiting gardens	75,597	8	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	237,788	20	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	270,623	46	sites	NI		
Volleyball	16,952	5	courts	12	-7	-6
Hunting	350,650	57,503	acres	19,902	37,601	49,340
Drive for pleasure	933,131	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	58,034	27	miles	-	27	32
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	84,303	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	4,864,196	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	38,486	NA	NA	NI		
Other	6,720	NA	NA	NI		

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Map X-18. Region 9 (Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission) Conservation Lands





